

MILITARY REFORM IN UKRAINE: expert opinion poll

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The first issue of the magazine contained an analytical report «Military Reform in Ukraine: the Start, or Another False Start?» It presented an analysis of the current situation in the Armed Forces and other military formations of Ukraine as well as the proposals of the Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies (UCEPS) regarding the possible directions for reforming Ukraine's Military organisation.

The report was the subject for discussion at a Round Table held in the conference-hall of Kyiv's «Rus» hotel on February 4, 2000. The Round Table attracted more than 100 experts, including People's Deputies of the Verkhovna Rada, Presidential Administration representatives, Government and National Security and Defence Council staff, the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all power structures, scientists, practitioners, independent experts representing non-governmental analytical centres, diplomats, foreign representative office employees, and journalists from Ukraine's mass media.

A poll was conducted among the experts during the Round Table where each participant was presented a questionnaire entitled «Problem areas of military reform in Ukraine», allowing them to express their attitude toward proposals made by UCEPS experts.

An analysis of the poll results of 50 experts demonstrated support for the basic UCEPS analytical report provisions on the part of the Round Table participants. Furthermore, some interesting alternative proposals were put forward during the course of the discussion on the directions of reforming the military sector, and the content and terms of specific events. All of these proposals deserve the attention of the State Commission for military reform which UCEPS experts suggest should be formed by Ukraine's President without delay.

The main conclusions reached from the discussion of the analytical report «Military Reform in Ukraine: the Start or Another False Start?» are presented below.

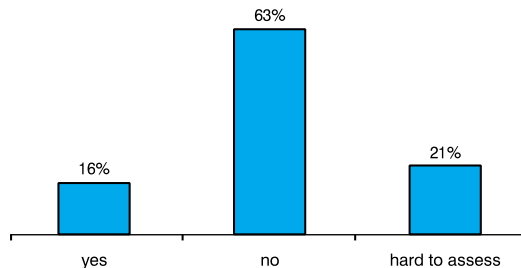


THE NECESSITY FOR MILITARY REFORM IN UKRAINE

From the very start of the meeting it became clear that participants' interest in the Round Table subject made the discussion of the agenda's first item — «Does Ukraine need military reform?» — unnecessary: 100% of those polled gave a positive answer. Round Table participants stressed that this time everything should be done to ensure the success of military reform despite all difficulties, and to avoid another false start. There is no exaggeration in stating that Ukraine's future, to a large extent, depends on the success of the military reform.

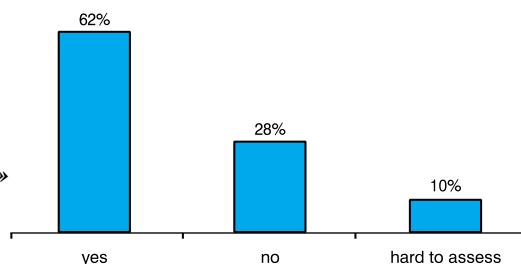
The UCEPS analytical report argues that **the Armed Forces and other military formations of Ukraine are presently unable to defend the nation's sovereignty in the event of a serious military threat. The majority of experts (63% of those polled) agree with this assessment (see Diagram).**

«Military organisation is capable of protecting Ukraine from military threats»



The situation, however, is not hopeless. **The majority of the polled experts (62%) agreed with UCEPS experts that preconditions for successful military reform do exist in Ukraine.**

«There are preconditions for successful implementation of the military exist in Ukraine»

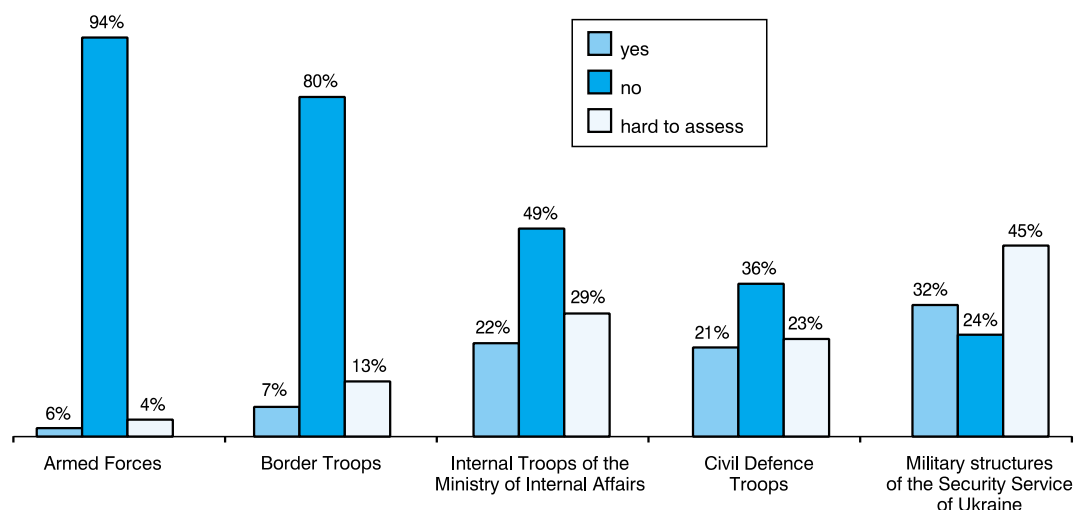


Ukraine's People's Deputies gave assurances that the Verkhovna Rada and specialised parliamentary committees have recently become headed by pragmatic politicians who can provide support for the reform course set by Ukraine's President. **It will not be easy for the military to work with the new leaders because of the latter's responsibility, exacting requirements, economy, and willingness to demand reasonable substantiation for each budget expense item from the military. However, there are reasons to believe that the newly created parliament majority will be able to support military reform in Ukraine more efficiently.**

PROVIDING THE MILITARY ORGANISATION WITH THE NECESSARY RESOURCES

Round Table participants generally assessed the level at which power structures are provided with resources as insufficient. Expert assessments regarding each military formation provisions as presented on the Diagram appear interesting. To a large extent, they coincided with the UCEPS experts' conclusion that «the Security Service and Internal Troops are much better funded, the Armed Forces and Civil Defence Troops are financed at a lower level while the Border Troops get the last drop.» A rather high proportion of experts (23-45%) who found it «hard to assess» the level of funding of power structures assigned with internal functions demonstrates the need for greater transparency of the Ministry of Emergencies' Civil Defence Troops, the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Internal Troops, and the Security Service of Ukraine's military structures.

«Power structures receive adequate resources for performing of their functions»





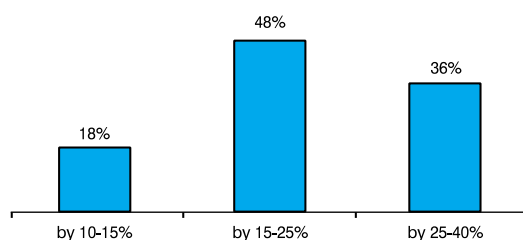
Round Table participants stressed that it would be difficult to discuss reforming the Military organisation without better funding of troops. Some strongly worded statements were made, such as «no one needs the Armed Forces, and they are surviving as guerrillas», «the Ministry of Defence proceeds from the need to keep the potential we used to have, but the State is unable to maintain it», «the military budget gives the implementation of military reform no chances», «no reform without money», etc. The example of Austria was cited where \$1.2 million a year are allocated per unit of military hardware and its personnel, while in Ukraine that figure is only \$31 thousand. A forecast showing Ukraine's inadequate economic potential was mentioned as among the other reasons hampering the implementation of the State Program for the Armed Forces Construction and Development.

The topic of the economic roots of the problem of reform appeared to be popular. Some participants supported the UCEPS position, maintaining that prior to the commencement of military reform state leaders must determine certain critical levels of funding of the power structures. For instance, one of the participants attempted to substantiate Ukraine's minimum defence budget at a level of not less than \$1 billion. NATO representatives also stressed the importance of background data for reform planning: precise data regarding the resources that the state is ready to allocate on reform are needed. Foreign experts expressed the view that Ukraine's national security will primarily be based on economic rather than military security. Ukraine's military scientists see the optimisation of manpower level as the way out, and the reduction and limitation of the tasks of the Armed Forces and other military formations. Where resources are unavailable, manpower should be reduced and the tasks should be adjusted.

NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF THE POWER STRUCTURES

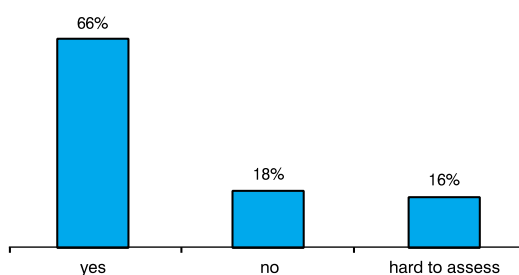
Most participants (66%) agreed with the conclusion of the authors of the analytical report that the numerical strength of Ukraine's Military organisation is excessive (see Diagram).

«Military organisation of Ukraine is overmanned»



None of the Round Table participants cast doubt on the need to reduce the numerical strength of Ukraine's power structures. Only their assessments of the scope of possible reductions were divided as the Diagram below makes clear. More than a third (36%) of those polled supported the quantitative parameters of the Military organisation suggested by UCEPS which provided for the reduction of the power structures' numerical strength by 25–40%. At the same time, nearly one half (48%) of the polled experts support a smaller scope for troop reductions — 15–25%.

It should be noted that if the present Armed Forces reduction rate is preserved (approx. 40 thousand men a year), the Ministry of Defence will achieve the target manpower figure suggested by UCEPS (150–170 thousand military men and 50 thousand civilians in 2005) one year earlier, in 2004. The UCEPS analytical report, therefore, formulated realistic and feasible targets.



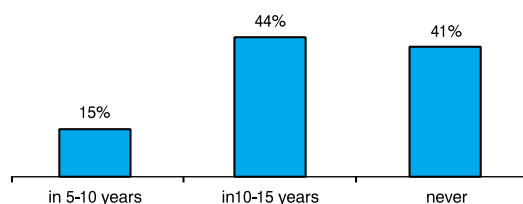
«Personnel of military formations can be reduced»

Discussion of the analytical report demonstrated a general understanding of the fact that the reduction of the Military organisation is not an end in itself, nor the ultimate aim of reform. The principle formulated by UCEPS experts — «during the reform process, the combat efficiency of the power structures must increase or, at least, not decrease» — is shared by both military and civilian experts.

MILITARY REFORM IN UKRAINE: THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION

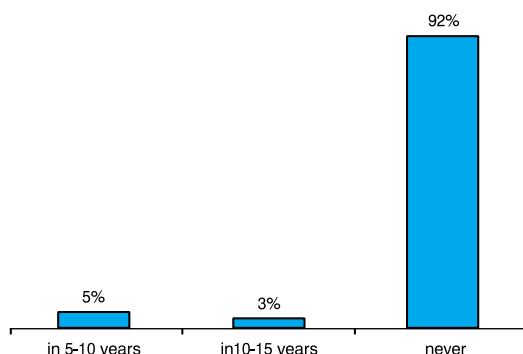
The external aspects of military reform attracted the attention of many Round Table participants. Not everyone agreed with the UCEPS proposal to preserve Ukraine's unaligned status for at least another 10–15 years (this opinion is also supported by 85% of the polled experts, as the Diagram makes clear). At the same time, 15% of those polled consider Ukraine's accession to NATO to be possible within 5–10 years, while the number of experts supporting joining the alliance comes to 59%.

«Ukraine has to join NATO»



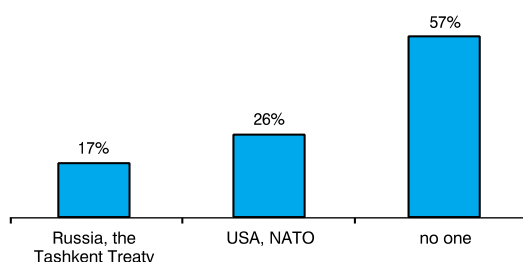
The idea of Ukraine joining the Tashkent Treaty enjoys far less support among the polled experts — only 8%. Instead, the overwhelming majority (92%) sees Ukraine's participation in the CIS collective security system (we expect it to gradually turn into a defensive block) inexpedient even in the more distant future¹.

«Ukraine has to join the Tashkent Treaty»



The thesis of the analytical report's authors, that «Ukraine has no allies; moreover, it doesn't have a single reliable partner» was confirmed by responses to the following statement: In the event of a military threat, Ukraine can rely only on its own forces. Poll results show that this view is shared by 57% of the experts.

«In case of a military threat, Ukraine can rely on military assistance from...»



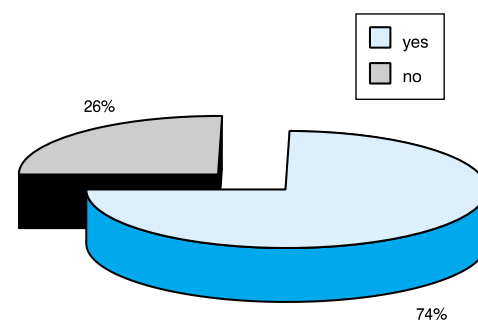
The uncertainty of the priorities of Ukraine's defence (and foreign) policy satisfies neither the authors of the UCEPS analytical report, nor the discussion participants. Reiterated was the urgency of adopting the new Military Doctrine of Ukraine which defines the achievable priorities of the military and military-technical policy, along with the conditions for employing the Armed Forces and other military formations. Participants emphasised the need to raise the impact of the state's leadership on the determination of Ukraine's military and political targets.

Despite the disbelief of the majority of those polled (57%) in the feasibility of military assistance to Ukraine in the event of a threat, the conclusion of UCEPS experts was generally supported: «in the event of an external threat, Ukraine (theoretically) could rely on certain military support on the part of the Russian Federation (17% of those polled) or the USA (26% of polled), depending on the source of the threat».

THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY SECTOR

The discussion participants shared the UCEPS experts' opinion regarding the need to strengthen democratic civilian control over Ukraine's Military organisation. Statements, such as «the Government and not the military should be held responsible for the absence of reform» were made. 3/4 of those polled supported the UCEPS proposal to appoint a civilian Minister of Defence (see Diagram).

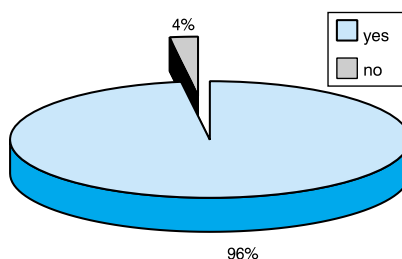
«Defence Minister must be civilian»



¹ During the Round Table discussion, it was repeatedly emphasised that Ukraine fell within the buffer zone between two centres of power, and became the subject of geopolitical bargaining between Russia and the USA.

At the same time, the UCEPS proposal regarding more active involvement on the part of the Chief of the General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces in the military and political decision-making process through his introduction into the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine enjoyed much higher support (96%). Unfortunately, the name of the Chief of the General Staff General V. Shkidchenko was missing from the Decree of the President of Ukraine determining the new personal composition of the NSDC of Ukraine².

«Chief of the General Staff must be a member of the NSDC of Ukraine»

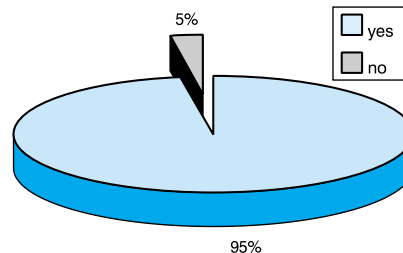


Round Table participants believe that military reform in Ukraine will be successful if there is fruitful co-operation between the Ministry of Defence, other power structures, government agencies, and non-government analytical centres.

Representatives of the General Staff, the General Military Inspectorate, and the NSDC staff pointed out that the Round Table's very organisation, and public discussion of the problems of military construction and publication of detailed information on the status of the power structures prove the military's openness to the public and the expediency of the participation of non-government analytical centre representatives in interdepartmental working groups drafting proposals on military reform.

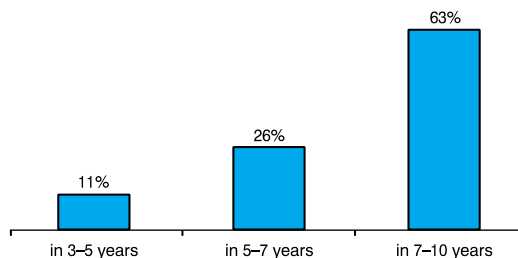
Almost all polled experts (95%) support the UCEPS proposal to issue an annual White Book «Defence Policy of Ukraine» that might become an important link between the military, the Government and society.

«Government must publish the White Book «Defence Policy of Ukraine» annually»



MANNING OF POWER STRUCTURES

Practically all Round Table participants were convinced of the expediency of Ukraine's future transition to the manning of the Armed Forces on a contractual basis. However, there were large differences concerning the period needed to make the transition to a professional armed forces. Representatives of the General Staff defended the position of the military agency (a minimum term of 15 years). One point of interest is that the Round Table participants called into question the General Staff's estimates (*see Diagram*), considering a much earlier transition to a fully professional army to be practical: 63% — in 2007–2010, 26% — in 2005–2007, 11% — in 2003–2005.



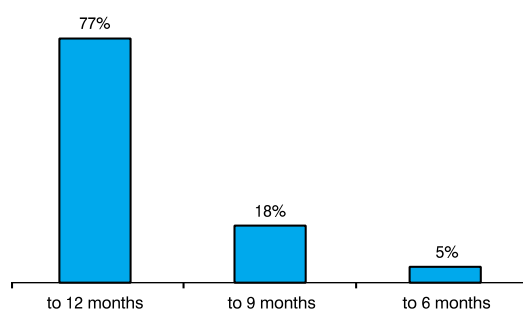
«Ukraine is capable to shift to professional army»

Therefore, the UCEPS proposal on the completion (generally) of the transfer to a professional armed forces in 2005, with the Army remaining a conscript service, may be viewed as a compromise, if one proceeds from the expert polling results.

The UCEPS analytical report suggests a reduction in conscript service to 12 months. This proposal was supported by over 3/4, or 77% of the polled experts. In our opinion, the President of Ukraine could sign a relevant decree as soon as today in order to provide for a transition to a reduced conscript service term beginning next spring.

² The Decree was signed February 2, 2000, or two days before the Round Table. Recent practice shows that NSDC's composition may change, meaning that the possibility of the introduction of the Chief of the General Staff into the NSDC should not be ruled out. UCEPS experts support President Kuchma's decision concerning the introduction of the Border Troops Commander General B. Oleksienko into the NSDC; the analytical report stressed the need for increased attention to this military formation on the part of the head of state.

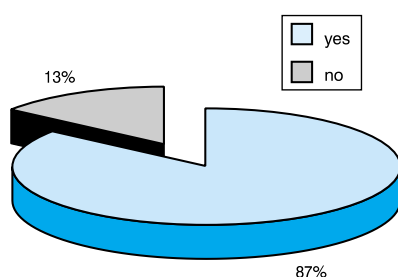
«Service of conscript has to be shortened»



OPTIMISATION OF THE STRUCTURE OF UKRAINE'S MILITARY ORGANISATION

None of the discussion's participants cast doubt on the analytical report's conclusion that the Military organisation of Ukraine is structurally excessive. A representative of the NSDC expressed his opinion that the existence of several state structures performing the same functions does not run contrary to world practice. The experience of the US was noted, where 15 or 23 structures perform similar tasks. This is indeed true, but UCEPS experts think that in the present economic conditions Ukraine cannot afford to maintain excessive parallel structures. The diagrams below show that this idea was shared by more than two-thirds of the polled experts.

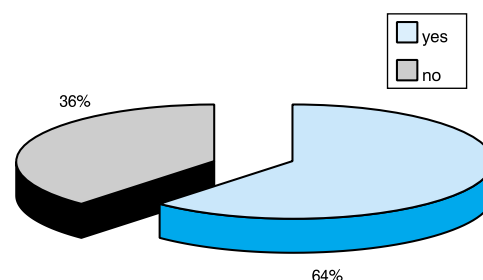
«Air Force and Air Defence Forces are to be united into a single service»



The UCEPS proposal regarding the merger of the Air Force and Air Defence Forces into a single branch of Ukraine's Armed Forces as in almost all other countries, was supported by 87% of those polled. General Staff and MoD representatives did not express their position regarding this step which was so clear to others.

The UCEPS proposal regarding the merger of the two military fleets, the naval units of the Border Troops and the Navy, into the Armed Forces of Ukraine was widely discussed. After the discussion, the majority of the polled experts (64%) supported the UCEPS proposal.

«Navy and the naval units of the Border Troops should be united»



Some participants in the discussion suggested the transfer of the entire Border Troops to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, arguing that such an approach proved to be effective in many European countries.

COMMISSION FOR MILITARY REFORM

The spirit of the discussion, which had been somewhat confrontational in the beginning, gradually became increasingly constructive. Nevertheless, a full consensus was not achieved. In particular, opinions were divided regarding the organisational basis for military reform planning in Ukraine.

Generals from the NSDC of Ukraine's staff, the General Military Inspectorate, and the General Staff do not believe it is expedient to form a State Commission for Military Reform. In their opinion, it would be sufficient to establish an interdepartmental working group headed by Defence Minister General O. Kuzmuk, and to put forward its proposals concerning the adjustment of the third stage of the State Program of Armed Forces Construction and Development through the year 2005³.

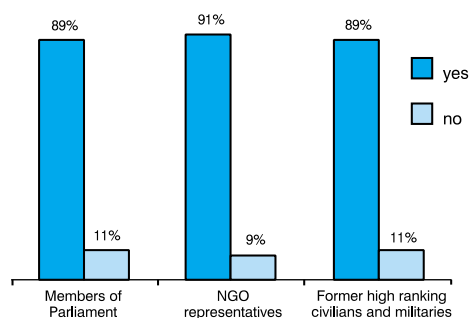
UCEPS experts and the majority of participants in the discussion believe that military reform goes far beyond the competence of each separate military formation. Reforming Ukraine's military sector lies beyond the authority of the Minister of Defence or the Chief of the General Staff. That's why UCEPS experts suggest that the President of Ukraine should immediately form the State Commission for Military Reform.

³ With the participation of the above-mentioned structures (and, evidently, the generals present at the Round Table) such a group has been formed, and a relevant Decree has been signed by the President of Ukraine.



Round Table participants almost unanimously (*see Diagram*) supported the involvement of the People's Deputies of Ukraine, NGO representatives, and former military and civilian leaders in the practical reforming of the Military organisation.

«The Inter-departmental Commission on military reform, among others, must include:»



The results of the expert poll concerning the candidacy for the chairman of the Commission for military reform were somewhat unexpected. Almost half (48%) of those polled were unable to name the person capable of heading such a commission. Some experts think it should be the President of Ukraine — the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Evidently, the desire to shift the burden of the problems of military construction to the top level was decisive. It is our contention, however, that this variant is improbable and unrealistic, given the difficult working schedule of the head of state. UCEPS experts suggest that the chairman of the Commission for military reform should be released from other official duties.

Candidates for the post of Commission Chairman proposed by Round Table participants collected the following number of votes:

Most of the nominees are well known and respected figures. However, it is evident that military men prevail in this list. In our opinion, this is because we polled mainly active or retired cadres. On the other hand, the proposed list of candidates once again confirmed the traditional perception that military problems are to be resolved by the military who know the business better than civilian specialists do. This is just another argument in favour of strengthening democratic civilian control over the military in Ukraine and organising the professional training of civilian experts who deal with defence issues.

The UCEPS analytical report formulated the criteria for the selection of the candidacy for the post of the Chairman of the Commission for military reform. One of the basic conditions is the personal tolerance of President Kuchma with the Commission Chairman and his high level of confidence in relations with the head of state. It is also desirable that the Commission be chaired by a civilian. In our opinion, the Commission on military reform should not be chaired by the head of any of the military formations, as this will not be conducive to solving nationwide problems. It is clear that most candidacies suggested by Round Table participants do not meet those criteria. On the other hand, many experts present on the list could take part in the Commission's work once it is established.

A. Lopata	Colonel-General, former Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine	23%
Ye. Marchuk	General of the Army of Ukraine, Secretary of the NSDC of Ukraine	20%
V. Horbulin	Advisor to the President of Ukraine, former Secretary of the NSDC of Ukraine	17%
A. Grytsenko	Colonel, UCEPS President, former Head of the Analytical Service of the NSDC of Ukraine staff	7%
K. Morozov	Colonel-General, Deputy Head of the Ukrainian Mission to NATO, former Minister of Defence of Ukraine	7%
V. Hrechaninov	Major-General, President of the Atlantic Council of Ukraine, former Advisor to the President of Ukraine on military issues	3,7%
O. Kuzmuk	General of the Army of Ukraine, Minister of Defence of Ukraine	3,7%
B. Paton	President, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine	3,7%
I. Pustoyi	Lieutenant-General, former Head of the Main Department of Foreign Relations of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine	3,7%
V. Tiutiunnyk	Major-General, section chief, the NSDC of Ukraine staff	3,7%
V. Sharyi	Major-General, Head of the National Scientific Research Centre for Defence Technologies and Military Security of Ukraine	3,7%
V. Shkidchenko	Colonel-General, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine	3,7%

IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORM PLANS

The most acute disputes and differences were observed in the course of discussion of concrete UCEPS proposals regarding the directions of reform, the terms for specific events, and the country's ability to implement them. The most critical views were expressed by MoD representatives who were not willing to speak about the beginning of nation-wide military reform, but rather about the adjustment of the existing State Program of Armed Forces Construction and Development. Meanwhile, some participants from among former military men stressed that, until recently, there had not been reforms but rather, unsuccessful attempts at reforming; emphasising the negative and excessively strong influence of subjective factors (frequent changes in MoD leadership, ungrounded and unjustified decisions) on armed forces construction.

Many important issues were touched upon during the discussion; proposals were made that were not properly examined in the UCEPS analytical report, but deserve attention and every bit of support. Among them were proposals regarding the establishment of the institution of chaplains in Ukraine's military formations, better military-patriotic education of the youth, the institution of the system of socio-psychological monitoring in the Armed Forces, a more active implementation of the experience of local military conflicts, etc.

When discussing foreign partners that could render practical assistance to Ukraine in implementing military reform, most Round Table participants (78%) named the USA and NATO (see Diagram). The Head of the NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine Mrs. S. Pond, present at the Round Table, affirmed the Alliance's interest in the consolidation of a democratic, sovereign Ukraine, and its readiness to render all possible assistance in military reform.

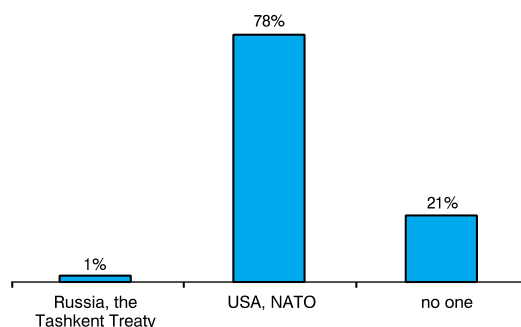
A similarly favourable position for Ukraine on the part of Western partners was reaffirmed during two high delegation visits to UCEPS headed by Christopher Donnelly, special advisor to NATO's Secretary General, and Dr. William Perry, the former US Secretary of Defence, respectively made on February 13 and 14 of this year. Our partners point to Ukraine's readiness to go beyond mere declarations, and to actively reform the defence sector in accordance with the new realities as a background precondition for co-operation with Ukraine in the military sphere.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the discussion of the UCEPS analytical report «Military Reform in Ukraine: Start, or Another False Start?» during the Round Table may be generally assumed a success. The subject of military reform in Ukraine, previously closed to broad public discussion, attracted the attention of national and foreign mass media: the work of the Round Table was covered by 18 publications, several news agencies, TV and radio stations.

The discussion of the analytical report that involved Ukrainian and foreign experts showed that the assessments and proposals presented by UCEPS experts were well grounded, realistic, and deserving the attention of Government officials. The questioning of Round Table participants proved that the majority of those polled had high praise for the depth of the analysis and the practical character of the proposals contained in the report. Clearly, some proposals need more detailed analysis, and their implementation will require proper funding, the amendment of applicable laws, etc. They cannot be rejected on the basis that they differ from the proposals of some military leaders; they should be considered and implemented. **The lack of funds should not hinder military reform; on the contrary, severe fund limitation is one of the basic reasons for forcing the Government of Ukraine into immediately reforming the costly and inefficient Armed Forces.** As far as the stages and terms for specific events are concerned, the balance of plans and programs should be based on the availability of resources. Unfortunately, this was not done during the development of the present programs for the construction and development of

«In reforming the military structures, Ukraine can expect the assistance from...»



power structures, otherwise their costs would not exceed the amount of budget funding.

The exchange of views between military and civilian experts made it possible to get a better idea of the reasons that hindered previous attempts to reform the Armed Forces, and verify the figures, estimates and conclusions presented in the UCEPS analytical report. For example, there are reasons for stating that the General Staff Department of the Armed Forces Construction and Development headed by General D. Umanets (mentioned in the analytical report) in 1994-1995 prepared a number of substantiated proposals concerning the liquidation of excessive structures in Ukraine's Armed Forces, and reform of the central staff of the MoD; their realisation could create a noticeable positive result. Unfortunately, some proposals were rejected by the leadership in place at the time. The Department also managed to reject many costly projects prepared without proper co-ordination at the national level. The discussion with the Round Table participants

produced new arguments confirming the practicality of merging the Navy and the naval units of the Border Troops, the expediency of decommissioning the cruiser whose maintenance is extremely expensive, the possibility of reducing conscript service to 12 months beginning with next spring's call-up, etc.

Despite the fears held by some guests that civilians and the military will go their separate ways after the Round-Table in any case, there are reasons for stating that we will manage to find common ground for the sake of the future of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and a stable, strong and democratic Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies has demonstrated its readiness to discuss acute problems publicly, consider different views, as well as its desire to actively participate in solving practical tasks after the formation of the State Commission on military reform. UCEPS intends to continue the practice of holding similar Round Tables for purposes of discussing military issues.

